Ilija Lichkovski

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Physicist and machine learning researcher based in the Netherlands with 3+ years of experience in technical research & engineering roles and 4+ years of leadership experience in the education sector.

Experience

ML engineer, forward-deployed engineer — *Oct 2025 – present*
Researchable (`researchable.nl`) — Groningen
- Built an effective AI coach for enterprise performance consulting, handling context-management, agentic grounding with tool use, and long-horizon coaching roadmap management.
- Other projects involve data science methods for steel processing, algorithm development for kidney transplant survival prediction, and external on-site discovery and/or consultation visits focusing on data infrastructure.

Research lead, AI safety researcher — *Mar 2025 – present*
AI Safety Initiative Groningen (`aisig.org`) — Groningen
- As a researcher, focused on an alternative approach for steering AI models (under review at NeurIPS 2025), and the first benchmark for LLM agent compliance with EU law (first author; under review at AAAI 2026)
- As research lead, focusing on creating a reliable talent funnel and facilitating research outputs by promoting research projects and matching talented researchers with senior supervisors.

Machine learning researcher — *Oct 2024 – present*
Manifold Machines (`manifold.mk`) — Groningen
- Released quality datasets for training medical QA, visual QA and mathematics capabilities that have gathered thousands of downloads; leading a 3-person team in using them to fine-tune the first Macedonian vision language model.
- Mentoring a student team from a partner organization in building a text-to-SQL interface for the Macedonian State Statistical Office that allows users to query and visualize complex data with natural language queries.

Team manager, financial auditor, selector & selections auditor — *Aug 2021 – present*
UWC Macedonia (`mk.uwc.org`) — Remote
- As team manager: coordinated a remote team of 20+ team members across 5 time zones and oversaw key reforms.
- As financial auditor: distributed north of **€2,300,000+** in scholarships, negotiated increased scholarship funding.
- As selection QA: evaluated 140+ applicants, performed 80+ interviews, audited 250+ candidate evaluations for quality.

Undergraduate researcher — *Apr 2024 – Jul 2024*
Zernike Institute for Advanced Materials (`rug.nl/research/zernike`) — Groningen
- Investigated the molecular basis of a rare genetic disease using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance spectroscopy.
- Designed experiments, applied a **novel** technique to probe their dynamics, created intuitive visualizations of results.
- Recommendations on updating the experimental design, procurement and methodology currently being implemented.

Engineering Intern — *Apr 2022 – Jan 2023*
Netherlands Institute for Space Research (`sron.nl`) — Groningen
- Responsible for characterizing a performance anomaly of an X-ray calibration instrument built for the **European Space Agency's** (ESA) flagship ATHENA space telescope set to be launched in the 2030s.
- Designed and performed advanced optical experiments, performed a comprehensive literature review spanning solid-state physics and engineering and developed mathematical models.
- Identified a **novel explanatory mechanism** behind the anomaly replacing the previously dominant hypothesis and introduced recommendations to corporate partners which are currently being utilized for redesign.

Skills

- **Software:** Python, C, Bash, Git, PyTorch, Linux, HuggingFace, Google Cloud Platform, Excel, biomedical image analysis in 2D/3D, ML engineering, AI agent engineering, reinforcement learning, data science.
- **Science & research:** literature review, end-to-end research project management, running compute-heavy experiments, statistical reasoning, scientific writing, accessible communication, adaptable presentation style.
- **Teamwork & leadership:** collaboration, intercultural communication with experience in 3 countries, team management across 5+ time zones, conflict resolution, remote work, talent scouting and evaluation.

Education

Bachelor of Science in Physics, specialization in Biophysics and Medical Physics — *2020-2024*
University of Groningen (`rug.nl`) — Groningen
- *Academic*: Biophysics and Medical Physics track, wrote 2 theses (one at SRON and one at ZIAM).
- *Extracurricular*: certified TA for *Programming for Life Sciences*, and *Physics, Astronomy and Society: Ethical and Professional Aspects*, self-coached in powerlifting for 3 years, endurance running.